



**STARTING** **WELL**  
[www.startingwell.org.uk](http://www.startingwell.org.uk)

The importance of sleep



# STARTING **WELL**

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## Who are we?

The Starting Well Service brings together Early Years Workers Health Visitors, Family Nurse Partnership and School Health which include immunisations and vaccinations.

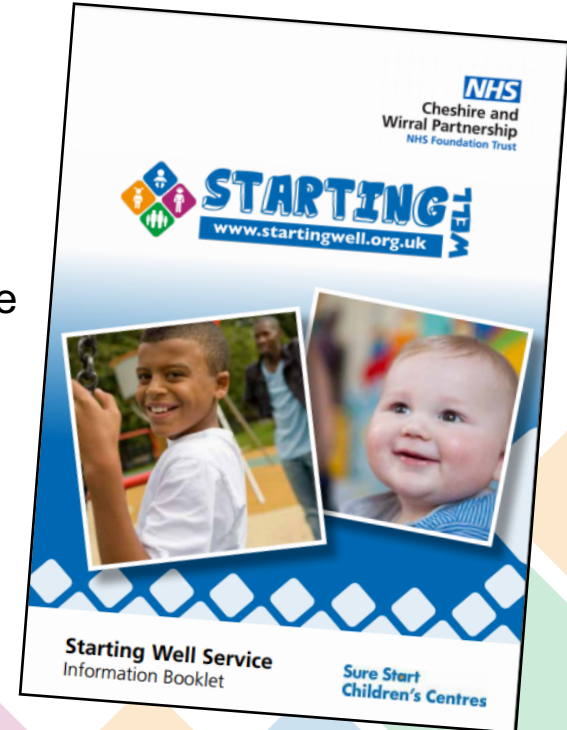
The team have an extensive range of skills and experience across the whole 0 - 19 workforce to deliver an integrated service for local children, families and young people.

The service is based within 8 Cheshire West and Chester Children's Centres.

Your local Children's Centre is Victoria Road, Neumann Street, Northwich, Cheshire.

Telephone – 01606 555286

email – [cwp.victoriaroadstartingwell@nhs.net](mailto:cwp.victoriaroadstartingwell@nhs.net)



Ensuring your child has adequate sleep is essential for their health and wellbeing.

Children who are sleep deprived are:

- Grumpy
- Irritable and may be hyperactive

Lack of sleep affects their:

- Growth
- Health
- Immune System
- Ability to learn and development
- Concentration
- Memory



## How much sleep do children need?

Below are the approximate hours of sleep needed by children of different ages, as recommended by the Millpond Children's Sleep Clinic.

### **2 years**

daytime: 1 hour 30 minutes

night-time: 11 hours 30 minutes

### **3 years**

daytime: 0 to 45 minutes

night-time: 11 hours 30 minutes  
to 12 hours

### **4 years**

night-time: 11 hours 30 minutes

### **5 years**

night-time: 11 hours

### **6 years**

night-time: 10 hours 45 minutes

### **7 years**

night-time: 10 hours 30 minutes

### **8 years**

night-time: 10 hours 15 minutes

### **9 years**

night-time: 10 hours

### **10 years**

night-time: 9 hours 45 minutes

### **11 years**

night-time: 9 hours 30 minutes

### **12 years**

night-time: 9 hours 15 minutes

### **13 years**

night-time: 9 hours 15 minutes

### **14 years**

night-time: 9 hours

### **15 years**

night-time: 9 hours

### **16 years**

night-time: 9 hours

## Relaxation tips to help sleep

Doing the same relaxing things in the same order and at the same time each night helps promote good sleep:

- A warm (not hot) bath will help your child relax and get ready for sleep.
- Keeping lights dim encourages your child's body to produce the sleep hormone melatonin.
- Once they're in bed, encourage your child to read quietly or listen to some relaxing music, or read a story together.
- Breathing exercise before bed.





## Your child's bedroom

Your child's bedroom should ideally be dark, quiet and tidy. It should be well ventilated and kept at a temperature of about 18 to 24C.

A night light can help to reduce night time fears in young children.

Fit some thick curtains to block out any daylight.

Having a TV in your child's bedroom does not encourage good sleep patterns. Watching TV before bed has a negative effect on the quality of your child's sleep



## **Avoid screens in the bedroom**

Tablets, smartphones, TVs and other electronic gadgets can affect how easily children get to sleep.

Older children may also stay up late or even wake in the middle of the night to use social media.

Try to keep your child's bedroom a screen-free zone, and get them to charge their phones in another room.

Encourage your child to stop using screens an hour before bedtime.



## Get help with sleep problems

If you've tried these tips but your child keeps having problems getting to sleep or sleeping through the night, you may feel you want more support.

You can speak to your GP, School Health Nurse or Health Visitor to begin with. They may refer you to a child psychologist or another expert.



## Resources

Sleep for children

[www.startingwell.org.uk/1273](http://www.startingwell.org.uk/1273)

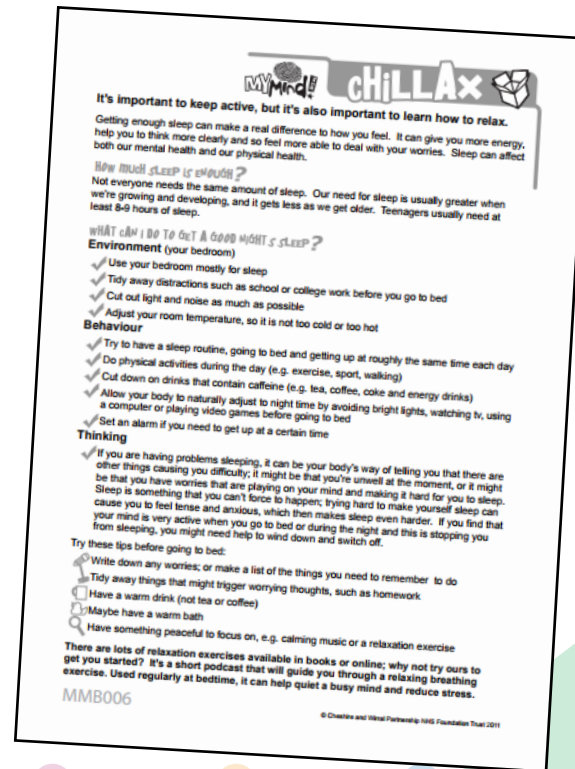
Sleep for teens

[www.startingwell.org.uk/1272](http://www.startingwell.org.uk/1272)

[www.mymind.org.uk](http://www.mymind.org.uk)

[www.sleepcouncil.org.uk/](http://www.sleepcouncil.org.uk/)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)



**MIND! CHILLAX**

It's important to keep active, but it's also important to learn how to relax. Getting enough sleep can make a real difference to how you feel. It can give you more energy, help you to think more clearly and so feel more able to deal with your worries. Sleep can affect both our mental health and our physical health.

**HOW MUCH SLEEP IS ENOUGH?**  
Not everyone needs the same amount of sleep. Our need for sleep is usually greater when we're growing and developing, and it gets less as we get older. Teenagers usually need at least 8-9 hours of sleep.

**WHAT CAN I DO TO GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP?**

**Environment** (your bedroom)

- ✓ Use your bedroom mostly for sleep
- ✓ Tidy away distractions such as school or college work before you go to bed
- ✓ Cut out light and noise as much as possible
- ✓ Adjust your room temperature, so it is not too cold or too hot

**Behaviour**

- ✓ Try to have a sleep routine, going to bed and getting up at roughly the same time each day
- ✓ Do physical activities during the day (e.g. exercise, sport, walking)
- ✓ Cut down on drinks that contain caffeine (e.g. tea, coffee, coke and energy drinks)
- ✓ Allow your body to naturally adjust to night time by avoiding bright lights, watching tv, using a computer or playing video games before going to bed
- ✓ Set an alarm if you need to get up at a certain time

**Thinking**

- ✓ If you are having problems sleeping, it can be your body's way of telling you that there are other things causing you difficulty. It might be that you're unwell at the moment, or it might be that you have worries that are playing on your mind and making it hard for you to sleep. Sleep is something that you can't force to happen; trying hard to make yourself sleep can cause you to feel tense and anxious, which then makes sleep even harder. If you find that your mind is very active when you go to bed or during the night and this is stopping you from sleeping, you might need help to wind down and switch off.

Try these tips before going to bed:

- ✎ Write down any worries; or make a list of the things you need to remember to do
- ✎ Tidy away things that might trigger worrying thoughts, such as homework
- ☐ Have a warm drink (not tea or coffee)
- ☐ Maybe have a warm bath
- ☐ Have something peaceful to focus on, e.g. calming music or a relaxation exercise

There are lots of relaxation exercises available in books or online; why not try ours to get you started? It's a short podcast that will guide you through a relaxing breathing exercise. Used regularly at bedtime, it can help quiet a busy mind and reduce stress.

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